



Plenary sitting

B8-0090/2017

17.1.2017

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 135 of the Rules of Procedure

on the Central African Republic
(2017/2507(RSP))

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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B8-0090/2017

**European Parliament resolution on the Central African Republic
(2017/2507(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Central African Republic,
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 February 2015 on the work of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly,
 - having regard to the statements by the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the situation in the Central African Republic, notably that of 17 November 2016 during the Brussels Conference for the Central African Republic,
 - having regard to the statement by the European External Action Service (EEAS) spokesperson on the attacks in the Central African Republic of 6 January 2017,
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on the CAR of 14 March 2016,
 - having regard to the remarks made by Marie-Therese Keita Bocoum, the UN independent expert on the human rights situation in the CAR, of 21 June 2016,
 - having regard the statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on Central African Republic of 28 November 2016,
 - having regard to UN resolution 2301 (2016) renewing MINUSCA’s mandate until 15 November 2017, adopted by the Security Council at its 7747th meeting, on 26 July 2016,
 - having regard to UN resolution 2262 (2016) renewing the Central African Republic (CAR) sanctions regime until 31 January 2017 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2017,
 - having regard to the Brussels Conference on the Central African Republic, held in Brussels on 17 November 2016,
 - having regard to the revised Cotonou Agreement,
 - having regard to the CAR’s Constitution adopted by the Transitional Council at the end of August 2015,
 - having regard to the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), ratified by the CAR in 2001,
 - having regard to Rules 135 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the President of the CAR Faustin-Archange Touadéra, democratically elected in February 2016, has to deal with the repercussions of more than two years of armed

confrontations and decades of weak governance and underdevelopment; whereas during this period armed groups took control of most of the territory and engaged in acts of destruction of goods and mugging, reprisals and numerous violations of human rights, making the population exhausted;

- B. whereas the government has allowed the adoption of a new constitution subject to referendum; the adoption of a republican pact for peace, national reconciliation and reconstruction; the launch of a pre-DDRR; the establishment of a mechanism to combat corruption and financial crimes; and the adoption of the law establishing gender equality in the CAR;
- C. whereas half of the CAR population (2,3 million) is in need of aid, out of which 1,2 millions are children; whereas there are 434,000 internally displaced people and 462,476 refugees in neighbouring countries;
- D. whereas Central African Republic is the second poorest country of the world, after Burundi; whereas it has faced a fragile security situation characterized by low economic development, lack of access to basic services, especially security; whereas due to the weakness of State capacities in various parts of the country, armed groups control vast parts of the national territory;
- E. whereas President Faustin-Archange Touadéra has made strong commitments to break the cycle of violence and bring peace, security and justice to the country; whereas in order to make a lasting commitment to peace and recovery, several structural causes of the crisis must be addressed;
- F. Whereas persistent impunity is causing instability and insecurity, as well as further human rights violations;
- G. Whereas CAR's domestic justice system requires major rebuilding to support the rule of law and hold perpetrators of crimes responsible;
- H. whereas the CAR plays a strategic role in the fight against the spread of terrorism in Central Africa and faces terrorist threats from Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)
- I. whereas since September 2016, the resurgence of violence in many towns has led to a continuous deterioration of the humanitarian situation with a huge increase in needs, especially in Kaga Bandoro, Bria, Bambari, Kouï and Bocaranga;
- J. whereas Seleka rebels killed at least 37 civilians, wounded 57, and forced thousands to flee when they razed a camp for displaced people in the Central African Republic in Kaga-Bandoro on in October 12;
- K. whereas on 5 January 2017 unknown attackers ambushed a convoy of the MINUSCA in Bokayai, in which one Bangladeshi peacekeeper was killed; whereas on 4 January a deadly ambush on a convoy in the south-eastern part of the country killed two blue helmets from Morocco and wounded two others;
- L. whereas the peacekeeping operation has been tarnished by allegations of sexual abuse of children and girls by UN soldiers and French peacekeepers;

- M. whereas both the Seleka and the anti-balaka armed groups profit from the timber and diamond trade by controlling sites and ‘taxing’ or extorting ‘protection’ money; whereas this actions hinder the economic activity of the country and difficult the proper allocation of humanitarian aid;
- N. whereas hundreds of prisoners have escaped in large-scale prison breaks, and the lack of resources means many of those accused of the worst crimes remain free; whereas just eight of 35 prisons function; whereas this poses a serious threat to civilians and to the protection of victims and witnesses; whereas justice and prosecution of grave human rights violations are among the critical tasks needed to end the abuses and rebuild the CAR;
- O. whereas since 2013 the European Union has contributed more than €500 million to assist the Central African Republic in responding to the cycle of insecurity, violence and political instability it is challenged with;
- P. whereas the Bêkou Trust Fund, launched in July 2014, initially constituted of € 64 million and currently € 136 million (out of which € 106 million come from the EU), has directly assisted more than 500,000 people; whereas the first donor conference on 26 May 2015, aimed at linking short-term humanitarian aid with medium-term resilience challenges, mobilized € 280 million;
- Q. whereas on 17 November 2016 the Brussels International Conference for the Central African Republic, which was organised by the European Union and the Central African Government, € 2,06 billion were pledged to support the Central African Republic's efforts to achieve peace, security and reconciliation, as well as to promote development and economic recovery, while continuing with the provision of humanitarian assistance;
- R. whereas the continuous work since 2003 of the OIF to strengthen democracy, rule of law and peace in the CAR, and which continues working in the current post-crisis reconstruction context;
1. Welcomes the opening-up process and the active will of the President of the CAR, Faustin Archange Touadera, democratically elected in February 2016, to implement his plan for the reconstruction and consolidation of peace 2017-2021, devoted to restore peace, security and reconciliation, to renew the social contract between the State and the population, and to promote economic recovery and the revitalization of the productive sectors; stresses that this plan must be supplemented by a Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) covering the period 2017-2019, focusing on severe malnutrition, protection against violence and the provision of basic services in unstable or inaccessible areas;
 2. Welcomes the work of the OIF in strengthening the capacities of the Central African institutions, providing technical support for the implementation of the Special Criminal Court, supporting the establishing of a National Commission on Human Rights, supporting the strengthening of the administrative and legal framework for elections, providing technical support for the implementation of DDR-SSR programs, and providing technical support for the Special Criminal Court through the mobilization of French-speaking magistrates;

3. Welcomes the ongoing implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) program; calls on the government to implement the Security Sector Reform (SSR) and the reform of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the internal security forces (police and gendarmerie); recalls the importance of developing and implementing a comprehensive strategy for inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders; stresses that disarming armed groups must be an absolute priority; calls for mechanisms to be established with neighbouring countries to tackle cross-border challenges (transhumance, arms trafficking, etc.);
4. Welcomes the EU Military Training mission (EUTM CAR) to support the Ministry of Defence in the implementation of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process, in close coordination with MINUSCA;
5. Remains deeply concerned over the situation in the Central African Republic;
6. Calls on the CAR authorities to focus on fighting against impunity and on the re-establishment of the rule of law, also by holding accountable before justice those responsible for violence; calls for increased protection of witnesses and victims, as the lack of protection is one of the key reasons for the lack of people testifying in criminal cases; insists on the Special Criminal Court, in charge of the investigation of war crimes and crimes against humanity since 2003, to be operational as soon as possible; insists on the adoption without delay of a strategy for transitional justice in order to address the legacy of past fundamental rights violations; as soon as possible; Welcomes the launch by the United Nations in December 2016 of the process of recruiting eight international judges.;
7. Calls on the CAR authorities to increase the number of judicial personnel and to improve diversity as only a small number of Muslims or women are represented in its justice system;
8. Calls on the CAR authorities and on the international community to increase support for civil society organisations in order to improve documentation of human rights abuses and crimes under international law;
9. Strongly condemns the attacks against peacekeepers and humanitarian organisations;
10. Calls on CAR authorities, in the name of national reconciliation, to safely redeploy judicial personnel across the country and reopen courts with the necessary means to ensure their proper function; calls for the demilitarization of prisons through the gradual replacement of the Central African Armed Forces through the recruitment of civilian prison staff;
11. Calls on the CAR to develop national policies and legislative frameworks that adequately protect the human rights of displaced persons, including freedom of movement; calls on the CAR to adopt durable solutions for displaced persons and refugees, including the voluntary, durable, safe and dignified return to their homes, and the local integration or resettlement;
12. Calls for the organization of local elections in order to help fill existing gaps to put in place a representative and accountable governance before the citizens;

13. Calls on the international community to address the root causes of the crisis, such as the widespread poverty, economic disparities and inequalities, rising unemployment, and the lack of redistribution of wealth from the country's natural resources via the state budget; calls for a comprehensive approach focusing on security, humanitarian aid, stabilisation and economic recovery; recalls that the recovery of the country also requires a dynamic and independent civil society, that non-state actors are key actors in development, and that their presence is fundamental to democracy, social justice and human rights;
14. Reaffirms its support to the MINUSCA peacekeeping force;
15. Strongly condemns all the violence against children and women, and urges all militias and non-state armed groups to lay down their arms, cease all forms of violence and immediately release children from their ranks; urges the countries whose soldiers are responsible for sexual abuse on peacekeeping missions in the CAR to hold them accountable and put them on trial;
16. Calls on the CAR authorities and foreign companies to help strengthen governance in the extractives sector by abiding by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; welcomes the EU initiatives on Conflict Minerals and Animal Wildlife trafficking as well as the EU-ACP Joint resolution on Illicit Financial Flows; urges international companies that are trading with CAR to fully respect the international laws on illicit trade and to be scrupulously attentive to any illicit trade from CAR;
17. Welcomes the success of the Brussels International Conference for the Central African Republic, not only in mobilizing additional resources to support progress towards stabilization and sustainable reconstruction of the country, but also in maintaining the CAR at the top of the political agenda; calls on donors to keep their commitments to ensure the sustainability of long-term actions, and to support the implementation of DDDR and RSS programs, the economic recovery, the national reconciliation, and the structural reforms;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Government authorities of the CAR, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary-General, the institutions of the African Union, ECCAS, the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly and the EU Member States.